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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 003693

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: POLITICAL LEADERSHIP WELCOMES MALIKI PEACE
INITIATIVE WITH MEASURED OPTIMISM

REF: BAGHDAD 3691

Classified by Political Counselor Margaret Scobey, reasons
1.4 (b) and (d).

¶11. (C) Summary and Comment: The four-point agreement signed October 2 by representatives of all the main Sunni and Shia political groups pledging to end militia violence was met with optimism by most national-level GOI contacts poloffs spoke to. Some Sunni political leaders noted that while the initiative was a positive step, PM Maliki did not go far enough in setting down the necessary conditions to bring an end to the violence. The agreement, which stipulates that &joint representative committee8 would be formed in each of the neighborhoods to contain violence and would be overseen by a Baghdad &ral committee8, closely resembles Shiite SCIRI's oft-proposed &neighborhood watch committee8 plan. As such, it may be viewed suspiciously by local Sunnis until they are convinced that the structure is truly representative. Baghdad Provincial Council members told poloff they had not yet received any indication as to how the committees would be formed, nor have they been contacted by anyone for input. End Summary.

FOUR POINT PLAN

¶12. (C) VP Tariq Al-Hashimi told CODEL Warner on October 2 that PM Maliki had been working for several weeks to bring together representatives from each of the Sunni Tawafuq and Shiite Itilaf bloc parties) especially the Shiite Sadrists) for a serious conversation about the militias problem. (reftel) All sides met on October 1 and October 2, and on the second evening, issued a joint four-point statement agreeing to:

- form joint representative subcommittees in each Baghdad neighborhood composed of political bloc leaders, religious and tribal leaders, distinguished individuals, and Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) to &combat and confine8 violence;
- form the &Central Committee for Security and Peace8 charged with follow-up on the subcommittees work and coordination with the Command General of the Armed forces;
- form a joint media committee to &monitor the media8;
- and meet on a monthly basis to review evaluate performance and make necessary adjustments.

¶13. (C) In An October 3 meeting with CODEL Frist, PM Maliki assured the delegation that that they would see 8a great decline in volume of terrorism and sectarian killings.8 He went on to say that &Tomorrow the people who signed will take an oath, and we will start holding people responsible. What encourages me is that this agreement was developed based on the desires of the parties themselves.8

REACTIONS POSITIVE, BUT CAUTIOUS

¶14. (U) The October 3 CoR session began with a brief discussion of the initiative, with Kurdish Alliance and secular cross-sectarian Iraqiyya members (who were not present at the Oct 1st/2nd meetings) seeking to congratulate Itilaf and Tawafuq on their successful discussions. Tawafuq bloc leader Adnan Dulaimi and Badr Organization head Hadi Al-Amiri gave remarks hailing the agreement as a milestone in the effort to end the violence plaguing Iraq.

¶15. (C) Most national-level GOI contacts poloffs spoke to characterized the talks as positive, with PM advisors Ahmed al-Sadawi and Sadiq al-Rikabi pointing particularly to the participation of the Sadrists at one ⁸ and Tawafuq at the other as a promising development. When PolOff asked if the political parties that signed the agreement truly had the will or the ability to effectively bring the militias affiliated with them under control, al-Sadawi responded, ⁸ time will tell.⁸

¶16. (C) A number of Sunni contacts complained to poloffs that, in a manner similar to his approach with the June national reconciliation plan, PM Maliki showed good initiative, but ⁸ did not go far enough.⁸ National Dialogue Council leader Sheikh Khalaf Ulayan told poloff that the talks truly were productive, but unfortunately, the four-point plan signed on the second day had been ⁸watered down⁸ from the eight-point version proposed at the end of the first day's meetings. (Note: The original plan reportedly addressed such ongoing concerns as the return of IDPs to their homes and compensation for the victims of

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militia violence. End note.) According to Ulayan, the Sadrists approached PM Maliki and said they would never sign on to an agreement that included these items. VP Hashimi advisor and high-ranking IIP official Naseer Al-Ani confirmed this information to poloff and added that reconciliation would never work if PM Maliki did not show leadership in tackling the difficult issues and bringing in those elements who were outside the process.

CONVINCING THE SKEPTICS

¶17. (C) Comment: The ⁸ joint representative committees proposed in the 4-point plan bear a striking resemblance the recurring SCIRI-proposed ⁸neighborhood watch committees⁸ plan that met with skepticism from all sides. For the joint representative committees to gain buy-in among the Sunnis and others, it will be necessary to ensure they are broadly representative and that they are truly a vehicle for making balanced decisions on security issues and not beholden to the interests of any political grouping. It will also be essential to build in meaningful participation from existing local government structures. When poloffs spoke to Provincial Council officials from Karada and Al-Rasheed on the afternoon of October 3, they were highly skeptical of the plan and its potential impact on their work, and had no indication as to how these committees would be formed, nor had they been contacted by anyone for input. End Comment.
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